

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mother Provincial Margaret Halloran, Chicago Province, Little Sisters of the Poor; Cecile Cooper and Daniel Ely, daughter and son-in-law of home resident Helen Cooper; and Ramona Sena and Evangeline Landford, daughters of home resident Reynalda Garcia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Pueblo Community College in Pueblo, Colorado

September 20, 1995

The President. Thank you so much.

Audience members. I love you——

The President. I love hearing it. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by thanking you all for making me feel so very welcome. Thank you, Dr. May, for opening your fine institution and for bringing all your students and a lot of the folks from the surrounding area here. Thank you, Governor Romer, for your leadership and your friendship. Ladies and gentlemen, I had the privilege of being a Governor of my home State for 12 years before I was elected President. I was never part of the Washington scene, but I knew quite a lot about what it took to be a Governor. And by the time I left office, most of us thought Roy Romer was probably the best Governor in the United States of America and was doing more for education than anybody else. Thank you, Diana, for your introduction and for the power of your example. You and your family are the best of what this country is all about. And I came here to talk about your future and the future of all the students here and, in fact, this entire country.

I'm glad to be back in Pueblo. Anyplace where I can wear my cowboy boots and feel comfortable and has an Arkansas River is all right as far as I'm concerned. I also believe in community colleges. When I was a Governor I helped start several. I saw it open the doors of opportunity to people of all ages and all backgrounds. They are truly the community colleges, the most open and democratic and opportunity-filled institutions in the United States today. And I know I am

at a good one today, and I'm proud to be here.

You know, our country has come a long way in over 200 years because we believed that we could always make the future better, and we believed we had an obligation to try. Pueblo was established in 1862, and one of the county commission's first acts was to collect money for a school. They knew that education could be better than gold, way back in 1862, and in 1995 it is more important than ever before.

I am here because the future of your education and those who come behind you is going to be affected by decisions which will be made in Washington, DC, in the next 2 to 3 months. All of you know that we are in a period of great change in our country. I believe that this period will be written up by the historians as a period of most profound change in 100 years, since the time we became an industrial society from a rural and agricultural one. Today, we are becoming a global economy, an information-based, technology-based society. We know that, and we know we have to make some changes so that we will be able to benefit from all these things that are going on in the world.

We know that one of the things we have to do is to provide lifetime learning for all of our people, to give everybody the opportunity to do well. And I've worked hard at that. I want to get more kids off to a good start at school. That's why we expanded Head Start. I want higher standards—[applause]—I want higher standards and smaller classes and more computers and other opportunities for our school students. That's what Governor Romer and I worked on Goals 2000 for.

I want more opportunities for young people who don't go on to the 4-year schools to get good jobs with good prospects for the future. That's what the school-to-work program that your president talked about is all about. I want more scholarships, more opportunities for community services, and more affordable loan programs for young people to go to college and for people who aren't so young to be able to go back to college. It's important.

Make no mistake about it, my fellow Americans, every dollar we spend investing

in education has a big economic payoff not just for the people who benefit from it. Every year of education after high school today generates between 6 and 12 percent of higher income for the people who get it. But it's more important than that. It gives more dignity, more meaning, more possibility to people's lives, and it makes our Nation stronger. We know we must do this.

I want to ask you today to think about all the things you know are going on in your Nation's Capital and the big argument we're having over the budget in terms of this fundamental fact: We're living in a global economy; what we can learn determines what we can earn. We have an obligation to pass on to the next generation a stronger, better America. We also have an obligation to balance the budget. That is part of passing on to the next generation a stronger, better America.

And so I ask you to consider this: How should we do that? That's the big question, not whether we should but how we should. I think we need new ideas and our old-fashioned values. We need to make decisions about this budget rooted in our devotion to freedom and responsibility; to work and to family; to giving young people a chance to do better; to fulfilling our obligations to the elderly, the disabled, and to poor children; to finding common ground instead of cheap and easy political rhetoric; and to doing the right thing for the future even if it's unpopular in the moment. We have to create the right kind of future for the United States of America.

We need to balance the budget. Your country never had a permanent structural deficit before 1981. In the 12 years before I moved to Washington as your President we quadrupled the national debt over the previous 200. There's no excuse for that. It's so bad now that the budget of your country would be balanced today if it weren't for the interest we pay on the debt run up in the 12 years before I took office. And we have cut the deficit of your country from \$290 billion a year down to \$160 billion in just 3 years. And it's the first time in 45 years that we've been able to do that.

So the question now is, how do we go all the way? How do we balance the budget con-

sistent with our obligations and our values? I believe that we should balance the budget in the same way I've been reducing the deficit—by cutting other things and increasing our investment in education, because that will make us a stronger country as well.

You know, almost half the people at this community college have Pell grants. I want to see more people have access to Pell grants, so more people with modest incomes can go on to college. Next year the University of Southern Colorado will join so many others around the country in participating in our direct student loan program, and this fine community college has applied to participate in it. Let me tell you what it does. The direct student loan program enables the Government to get rid of all the redtape, the banks, and the middle men and all the excessive costs from the student loan program, to send money directly to a school to give to the students at lower costs with better repayment terms, receiving the money more quickly.

Every school I have talked to that has participated in this program loves it because it's a lower cost for the school, lower cost for the students, and there are many more options to repay. One of the most important things about this direct loan program is that a young person can repay his or her loans based on a percentage of the income they earn when they go to work. So you never need to fear that you can't afford to borrow money because you may not have a lot of money when you get out.

I believe in the direct loan program. I believe in the Pell grant program. I believe in the AmeriCorps program, the national service program which enables people to earn money for college. Here in Colorado, you have young people working to keep kids out of gangs, to teach adults to read, to renovate vacant houses for working families, to clean up parks for children to play in, and in return, earning some money to go to school.

And I also believe that we can balance the budget and have the right kind of tax cut. But I favor a smaller, more targeted tax cut for middle income American families to educate themselves and their children and to raise their children. Let's value child-rearing and education. If we're going to have a tax

cut, let's finance more people going on to school.

The last thing I want to say is that I think we ought to have special educational opportunities for people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. When I was—30 years ago when I was in college, 8 in 10 people who were laid off from work were called back to the same old job as soon as the economy got better. Today, 8 in 10 people who are laid off from work are not called back to the same old job because the economy is changing.

So I have asked this Congress to take about 70 different training programs the Government has, put it into a pool of money and just simply give a voucher to a person who loses a job, worth up to \$2,600 a year, to take to the local community college to get trained for a better life, a new start, a stronger beginning.

If we do this and balance the budget, over the next 7 years 20 million more people will be eligible for lower cost, better repayment college loans. Three million more people will get the Pell grant scholarships that enable so many of you to be here. If we keep this commitment, we can have over 1.1 million people going on to college by the end of this decade, and we can do all that and balance the budget. The question is, will we?

The debate we're having in Washington today—I want to emphasize again—is not over whether to balance the budget, it's over how to balance the budget consistent with the fundamental values of this country. A majority of people in the Congress have a plan that reflects very different value choices. If their plan prevails, we won't be able to help as many poor kids get off to a good start in school; we won't even be able to keep helping as many as we are now; we won't be able to help as many schools to achieve those smaller classes and higher standards and more computers in the classrooms. And we certainly will see it become harder and more expensive to finance a college education, which means not as many people will go. There will be no more AmeriCorps, no national service program. There will be over 4 million fewer people getting Pell grants over the next 7 years. The direct lending program that this school wants to get into is

going to be either severely limited or abolished, and the application that you have to give all your people here a better chance to go on and succeed will never see the light of day.

Now we learn that some in the Senate even want to charge colleges to process the Government loans. The president of the University of Kansas was quoted today as saying, "That's like charging people who run grocery stores to handle food stamps." Can you believe that? They actually want to start making the community college pay just to have people here with college loans. They want to raise the interest charged to working families who take out loans to send their children to college. They also, believe it or not, want to do some other things which will dramatically undermine the ability of people to go to college and all told—listen to this—all told, will cost over \$7 billion for students, their families, and their schools over the next 7 years.

Now, this is not about money. This is not about balancing the budget. This is about what kind of country we're going to be and what our obligations to each other are. They have made three value choices in Congress. They say we have to balance the budget in 7 years, even if we could increase education and still balance it in 8, 9, or 10 years.

Then they say we have to give a huge tax cut of \$250 billion, half of it going to upper income people like me who don't need it and don't want it. But they're determined to give it anyway, even if they take it away from you and your education and your children's future. And they say that we're going to take some of this student loan money away from the students and give it back to the banks and the middlemen, even though it raises the cost of going to college, provides more paperwork headaches for the schools, delays the loans getting to the students, and robs you of the option of repaying based on a percentage of your earnings. They say these interest groups didn't like it when they lost the money. We're cutting education, but we're going to give them some of their money back.

Now, those are value judgments. This is not just about money. Our solemn obligation is to reward people who are willing to work to make the most of their own lives, to make sure that the enthusiasm these young people

have shown us today becomes mirrored in brilliant, successful, happy lives that make America a stronger place and guarantees that their children will have an even better America to grow up in. That's what this is all about.

So I challenge Congress to work with me to find common ground, to balance the budget without raising the cost of going to college to pay for a tax cut. It is not necessary, and it is not right. It is not consistent with basic American values. We can balance the budget, cut taxes for middle class people who need it to educate and raise their children, and still increase our investment in education. Let us do this the right way and advance what America really stands for. That's what this is all about.

I saw a very moving picture in the newspaper here today of the trip that President Kennedy made in 1962. He came here to honor the citizens who had built Pueblo 100 years before. And he said this, "I hope that those of us who hold positions of public responsibility in 1962 are as far-seeing about the needs of the country in 1982 and 1992 as those men and women." Well, President Kennedy's generation was. They went to the moon. They explored new frontiers of science and technology. They ensured that we would win the cold war. They advanced the cause of education and economic growth and world peace.

In this day and age, the popular thing to do would be just to go along with all of this, because the popular thing is to tell you that your Government is the cause of all your problems; all Government is bad and all tax cuts are good. I know that would be popular. But friends, almost all the money the Government spends today is on medical care for the elderly and the disabled, Social Security, the national defense, interest on the debt, and education and other investments in our future. I want to cut it some more. I want to get rid of the things we don't need. I want to balance the budget. But the popular view is not right.

Your Government is you. And we better invest in your education and your future. Twenty, thirty, forty years from now the people who are sitting here on this great lawn will appreciate it if they know we balanced

the budget and secured our financial future in a way that protected the educational future, the economic well-being, and the fundamental values of the United States of America. Let us resolve to do that and to do it together.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. on the College Center lawn. In his remarks, he referred to Joe May, president, Pueblo Community College, and student Diana Gurule.

Statement on the Decision To End Airstrikes in Bosnia

September 20, 1995

The U.N. and NATO commanders are in agreement that the Serbs have completed the required withdrawal of heavy weapons from the exclusion zone. The Sarajevo airport has been opened. U.N. and humanitarian traffic is moving along the main routes into the city. Therefore, the commanders have concluded that the NATO airstrikes can be discontinued. I welcome this development. The NATO air campaign in Bosnia was successful.

But let me also repeat what I have said before: Renewed attacks on Sarajevo or the other safe areas, or any Serb noncompliance with their other commitments, will trigger a resumption of NATO airstrikes.

The results of NATO's and the U.N.'s actions will help us achieve a peaceful settlement in Bosnia. They show, once again, that firmness pays off. We all are proud of the American and allied air crews who conducted the NATO operation with such bravery and skill.

All parties should now turn from the battlefield to the bargaining table and complete a political settlement. Ambassador Holbrooke and his team have made additional progress since the Geneva meeting 12 days ago. The time has come to end the fighting for good and begin the task of reconciliation and reconstruction in the Balkans.